



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MDA Reports Weights and Measures Law Violations**

*Reports Cover December 2013 through January 3, 2014*

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (Jan. 24, 2014)** – The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Weights and Measures Section inspects and regulates devices used to determine the quantity of commodities as diverse as fuel oil, food products, livestock, grain, and precious metals. The following enforcement actions have been taken against violators:

- Wegmans in Columbia - On December 9, 2013, MDA received \$1,500 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight packages
- Grand Mart in Landover - On December 10, MDA received \$750 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight package
- Giant Food, Bethesda - On January 3, 2014, MDA received \$ 1,000 for a civil penalty assessed for short weight packages

Short weight violations occur when MDA finds less product in a package than the label states, whether it's a gallon of gas or pound of meat. A price verification violation occurs when a cash register with a scanner or bar-code reader charges a price that is different than the price on the shelf or the price tag. There are no penalties assessed if the price charged a consumer is lower than the price on the shelf.

During FY 2012, MDA issued 93 civil penalties that amounted to \$94,250, most for packaging short weight violations and price misrepresentation. MDA completed field inspections of 8,261 package lots with 19.4 percent in violation; 16,002 price scanning and method of sale was inspected with 3.4 percent in violation. MDA field inspectors conducted 1,067 large scale inspections, with 16.1 percent in violation; 743 medium scale inspections, with 16 percent in violation; and 8,385 small scale inspections, with 21.5 percent in violation. MDA also inspected 28,970 retail gasoline meters, with 19.6 percent in violation; 481 LP gas meters, with 27.8 percent in violation; and 1,104 vehicle tank and rack meters, with 12 percent in violation. Inspectors tested 134 grain moisture meters, with 24.6 percent in violation. Other inspections include 2,072 tare inspections, with 11.9 percent in violation; and 1,294 inspections of delivery tickets, with 0.7 percent in violation. The state metrology lab conducted tests on 1,726 weights, with 13.3 percent rejected; 34 volumetric measures, with 41.2 percent rejected; 31 temperature devices, 2 timing devices and 405 grain samples. The lab completed National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) re-accreditation in November 2011.

MDA also investigated 584 consumer complaints during FY 2012, most related to complaints about the accuracy of retail motor fuel dispensers. That is an average of 2.4 complaints investigated every work day.

For more information about how the Weights and Measures program works, see:  
[http://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/ag\\_brief/AgBrief\\_WeightsMeasures.pdf](http://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/ag_brief/AgBrief_WeightsMeasures.pdf)

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